

the Rabbins at Turin. Those who give directions—after the manner of Edmund Yates and Du Maurier—for the incineration of their bodies after death are deprived of the Sacraments before passing away and of Christian burial afterwards. Among the reasons which prompted this decree was the fact that cremation had been notoriously adopted by the Freemasons and other infidel associations of Continental Europe as a public expression of their disbelief in the doctrine of the resurrection and of the truer and higher life that lies beyond death and the grave. It is, of course, needless to remind our readers that the reduction of the body by fire offers no impediment to its future resurrection, for God's almighty power can effect its reintegration whether it be merged in the earth from which it was taken, or devoured by wild beasts, or dissolved into gaseous elements by the action of a furnace. The catacombs of Rome were the receptacles of the ashes of some of the early martyrs. But a general feeling has during all times existed in favor of committing the bodies of our dead to the kindly earth. Christians have thus long tacitly expressed their belief that, in the Scripture phrase, our body is planted as a seed in the earth, out of which we hope it will rise on the last day to a glorious immortality. 'It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption' (1. Cor., xv., 42).

The Church has never condemned cremation in itself. She permits, and even encourages, the burning or calcining of the bodies of the dead in times of pestilence, as the Jews did (Amos, vi., 10), and on battlefields, where great numbers of festering bodies corrupt the atmosphere. Her prohibition arises partly from the motive given above, partly from reasons connected with her ritual, her processes of canonisation and veneration of relics, but chiefly, perhaps, because she looks upon even a lifeless Christian body as something different in nature and destiny from the remains of a brute. It is not in every sense dead. Like Lazarus, it 'only sleepeth'—awaiting the hour of its resurrection. And she is convinced that our soulless bodies are treated with greatest respect when consigned to mother earth with placid face, with form unaltered, to await the great day when the dry bones shall clothe themselves again with human shape and in the flesh the newly risen creature shall see God its Savior.

THE FLOWERY KINGDOM.

BITS OF CHINA, OLD AND NEW.

A PECULIAR STRIKE.

A very peculiar 'strike' is recorded as having been in progress in Canton, China. The executioners, who do the beheading, are complaining that, unless they get more money, they will starve. It appears from their complaint that they are paid 500 cash (1s) per head, and they demand 2s. One shilling is a small fortune to a poor Chinaman, but it seems that business has fallen off to a deplorable extent, or there is too much competition, and the executioners are suffering.

THE EARLY MISSIONARIES.

The *Attaché at Peking* is a book recently published in London from the pen of Mr. A. B. Freeman-Mitford, C.B. The *Spectator* of September 29 had a lengthy review of the work, in the course of which it said:—

'In a preface written since the relief the Legations, he (Mr. Freeman-Mitford) expresses the decided opinion that the hostility of the Chinese towards Europeans is not due to missionary enterprise, and he fortifies this opinion by a singularly interesting sketch of the relations of the early Jesuit missionaries, such as Ricci, Schall, and Verbiest with the court of China. Father Ricci's treatise on the "True Doctrine of God," written in admirable Chinese, and revised, oddly enough, by a Minister of State called Sin, was included in an Imperial list of the best Chinese books. The daughter of one of his converts, baptised Candida, built 39 churches, and the Emperor gave her the title of "the virtuous woman." This, it is true, was early in the seventeenth century. Fifty years later Father Schall was actually tutor to the young Emperor, Kang Asi, afterwards one of the greatest of Chinese rulers, under whom Father Verbiest became court astronomer and constructed those beautiful bronze instruments which are still among the wonders of the observatory at the southern corner of the Tartar city.'

[A few weeks ago we were informed by cable that these instruments had been removed by some of the representatives of the Powers, and were to be sent to Europe.]

CHINESE POLITENESS.

The Rev. Bertrand Cotonay, O.P., writing in the *Dominicana*, says:—We have all heard of Chinese politeness as something exquisite. Indeed, it is remarkable! One of the literati comes to see me. He bows in a gracious manner. I acknowledge it. Afterwards he addresses to me some conventional, stereotyped platitudes, to which I am bound to make the conventional answers. He will ask what is my precious name, and I must answer that my vile name is such. He will tell me that he admires my palace; I must answer that my wretched hut is not worthy to receive his excellency. I must not inquire for his wife; it would be scandalous. Besides, he may have three or four.

However, if the turn of the conversation brings my visitor to speak of his wife, he will not call her by name. Generally she has

no name. He will mention 'the abject creature of my interior apartments,' or 'the vile enclosed one,' or something similar. Nor may I inquire for his children; it is not permitted. They are so little to him! Nor may I ask for anybody else; it would be an injury to him! During the conversation he freely expectorates, regardless of surroundings; he despises a handkerchief, but in meanest ways avails of one's tablecloth or curtains. Tea having been served, he first rinses his mouth with it and ejects it on the floor. Then another deep bow and more conventional sentences, and he departs.

THE FIGHT AT TIEN-TSIN.

Colonel Meade, who commanded all the American forces at Tien-tsin, arrived at Honolulu on September 1 on the transport *Solace en route* to San Francisco. Colonel Meade, who is a soldier of 35 years' experience, says the slaughter of Chinese at Tien-tsin was the worst he ever saw. 'I have been in the war business for 35 years, and went through the American Civil War,' said Colonel Meade, 'and I never saw such slaughter as was inflicted at Tien-tsin on the 13th and 14th of July. When we finally entered the walled city there were dead and mangled bodies every few feet, it seemed. They lay all over the streets. There was no special attempt made to get the figures of the enemy's loss. The dead were simply buried as quickly as possible, and the Chinese started along the Pekin road with what wounded they could look after. There were about 2000 of these.'

The Japanese troops are most enthusiastically praised by Colonel Meade. He says that their behaviour was simply splendid. They showed themselves as brave as any of the forces engaged, and their discipline and intelligence were up to the highest standard.

FAIR STATEMENT OF THE POSITION.

A correspondent of *Harper's Weekly*, writing from China says: The Roman Catholic Christians were often oppressed by non-Christians, members of their community, and as a result the Church appointed two of her priests to attend to no other duties except the investigation of evidence in case of litigation, and the conduct of such cases as they thought unjust before the official. The fact that they had official rank, and the other very important fact that they were foreigners, added to their power, and they were thus able to meet the official not only on his own ground, but with the additional power of understanding foreign law. The Christians were, therefore, enabled to obtain justice.

CHINESE CUSTOMS.

Among the peculiar customs that prevail among the Chinese (says an exchange) a not interesting one is that of the Merit System, or keeping account of the merits or demerits of a man. For the loaning of an umbrella, or freeing a bird from imprisonment, he is entitled to one merit. If he gives a coffin to a bereaved family he may add 30 merits to his list. If he pays the debts of his father 10 merits go to his list. It is worth 50 marks to save a child's life. Two good works that each entitles a man to 100 marks is first to publish a good book; second, to marry after having become rich, an unattractive girl whom he had promised to wed before he had acquired wealth.

One of the minor sins is to dig an insect out of its snug nest in winter. This unkindness is punished with one demerit. The penalty of five demerits is attached either to having blotted a book or become intoxicated. In some parts of China it is considered just as wicked to eat beef as to kill a child. Either offence is punished by 100 demerits.

THE FUTURE OF CHINA.

Colonel Charles Denby, late Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to China, has an article in a recent issue of the *Forum* entitled 'The future of China and the Missionaries.' Having stated that for 250 years (he might have said many more) the Catholics had been in China, while the Protestants came only in this century, he goes very straight to the Berthemy Convention, saying: 'France, the natural protector of the Catholic missionaries, secured the adoption of what was called the Berthemy Convention, under which the French missionary has the right to go into any province and buy land, build houses, and permanently reside.' And now he says that the world declares the missionary to be the cause of the recent outbreaks in China, and that one of the problems is whether his work there shall be given up; to which Colonel Denby replies categorically, first, that he does not find, in the accounts published of existing disturbances, that a distinct anti-missionary feeling was the impelling force of the riots; nor, secondly, that the missionary was driven out because he was a missionary, but because he was a foreigner. Then, in regard to the question whether the work should be abandoned, he says that the undoubted fact should be recognised that the Catholic powers—the Pope, Spain, Italy, France—will never consent that their missionaries shall be driven from Chihli. Their interests there, he says, are immense, with twenty-eight bishops in the empire, three being in China alone, and with vast establishments over the country, with schools, colleges, asylums, industrial schools, carpenters' and other shops, and all the forms of labor. The chief religious societies—Jesuits, Benedictines, Augustinians, Lazarists, Franciscans—are found in many places. 'You cannot turn the dial of progress back. You cannot revoke all the treaties. You cannot undo the work of the three centuries. . . . It is not in Christian nature to disregard the divine command to go into the world and teach all nations. The subject transcends the scope of human laws.' And then Colonel Denby again declares his belief that the troubles were not caused by missionaries, but by racial feeling. He cannot think such serious disturbances arose from antagonism to men and women with lives mostly devoted to charity.

The McCormick Harvesting Machine Company built and sold 213,629 machines in the season of 1899. This is the greatest sale of harvesting machines ever made by one company.—*N.Y.*